REMARKS

This application has been carefully reviewed in light of the Office Action dated April 28, 2003. Claims 21 to 31 are now pending in the application, with Claims 1 to 20 having been canceled and Claims 21 to 31 having been added. Claims 21, 25 and 31 are the independent claims herein. Reconsideration and further examination are respectfully requested.

Claims 1, 3, 15 and 18 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as allegedly being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,910,803 (Grau), Claim 2 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over Grau in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,049,827 (Sugauchi), Claims 4, 5, 11 to 14, 16, 17, 19 and 20 were rejected under § 103(a) over Grau in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,393,478 (Bahlmann), and Claims 6 to 10 were rejected under § 103(a) over Bahlmann in view of Grau. Without conceding the propriety of the rejections, Claims 1 to 20 have been canceled, thereby obviating the rejections. Nonetheless, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections are respectfully requested and Applicant submits that newly-added Claims 21 to 31 are allowable over the art of record for at least the following reasons.

The present invention concerns searching for a device. According to the invention, a user inputs location information in order to search for a predetermined device, whereby the location information is transferred to an information processing apparatus that performs the search. The information processing apparatus that performs the search retrieves location information of the information processing apparatus that transferred the search request, and then searches for a device in accordance with the location information input by the user and the location information retrieved from the apparatus that transferred the search request. Device information of a device searched is then transferred by the apparatus that performed the search to the apparatus that requested the search. As a result,

the user can input a simple location for a search. However, since the location of the apparatus transferring the search request is also retrieved, and the search is performed using both locations as search criteria, only search results which meet the user's input criteria and the retrieved location information are returned to the apparatus.

With specific reference to the claims, newly-added independent Claim 21 directed to a device which receives the search request and performs the search. Specifically, Claim 21 is an information processing apparatus comprising a storage unit arranged to store location information of a plurality of devices, a reception unit arranged to receive location information which is input by a user in order to search for a predetermined device and which is transferred from another information processing apparatus, a retrieval unit arranged to retrieve location information of the another information processing apparatus, a search unit arranged to search for a device, whose location information is stored in the storage unit, in accordance with the location information received by the reception unit and the location information stored in the storage unit, and a transfer unit arranged to transfer device information searched by the search unit to the another information processing apparatus.

Newly-added independent Claim 31 is a method claim that substantially corresponds to Claim 21.

Newly-added independent Claim 25 is directed to the device which transfers the search request and which receives results of the search. Specifically, Claim 25 is an information processing apparatus comprising a first transfer unit arranged to transfer location information input by a user in order to search for a predetermined device, a second transfer unit arranged to transfer location information of the information processing apparatus itself, and a reception unit arranged to receive search results based on the

location information transferred by the first transfer unit and the location information transferred by the second transfer unit.

The art of record, alone or in any permissible combination, is not seen to disclose or to suggest the features of newly-added Claims 21 to 31. In particular, and with regard to Claims 21 and 31, the art of record is not seen to disclose or to suggest at least the feature of searching for a device based on location information input by a user and location information retrieved from an apparatus that transfers the location information input by the user. Similarly, with regard to Claim 25, the art of record is not seen to disclose or to suggest at least the feature of an apparatus that transfers location information input by a user in order to search for a predetermined device, that transfers location information of the information processing apparatus itself, and that receives search results that are based on the location information input by the user and the location information of the apparatus itself.

Grau is merely seen to disclose a tool for displaying a network computer system using a hierarchical map. A management server receives data to display a logical relationship between system elements as a map. The map is retrieved based on a user input of the name of the map. However, nothing in Grau is seen to disclose that a search is performed for a device based on location information input by a user and location information of an apparatus which transferred the user's input search request, where the location information is retrieved from the apparatus that transferred the request by the apparatus performing the search. Accordingly, Grau is not seen to disclose or to suggest the features of the present invention.

Sugauchi is seen to disclose that a network architecture is displayed as a hierarchical map. (See Fig. 4) A network management collection program collects management information from each device on the network and stores the information,

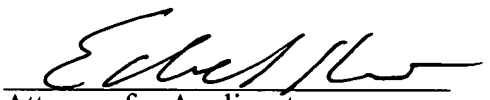
which is then displayed with or can be accessed via the map. However, nothing in Sugauchi is seen to disclose that a search is performed for a device based on location information input by a user and based on location information of the apparatus that transferred the search request, where the location information of the apparatus that transferred the search request is retrieved by the apparatus performing the search. Therefore, Sugauchi is not seen to add anything that would overcome Grau's deficiencies.

Bahlman is merely seen to disclose that a user can search for a device by entering a MAC address, customer name, city, etc. (See column 9, lines 40 to 64.) However, this process may merely be seen to correspond to the user's input of location information as claimed in the present claims, but Bahlman is not seen to disclose that location information is retrieved from the apparatus that transferred the search request and that the search is performed based on both the user's input and the retrieved location information of the apparatus that transferred the search request. Accordingly, Bahlman is also not seen to disclose or to suggest anything that would overcome the deficiencies of Grau and Sugauchi.

In view of the foregoing deficiencies of the art of record, all of newly-added Claims 21 to 31 are believed to be allowable. Accordingly, the entire application is believed to be in condition for allowance and such action is respectfully requested at the Examiner's earliest convenience.

Applicant's undersigned attorney may be reached in our Costa Mesa, California office by telephone at (714) 540-8700. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our address given below.

Respectfully submitted,



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